

Response Protocol for Suspected West Nile Virus (WNV) Infections



(Use with “*Information for Clinicians*” Fact Sheet to answer calls from health care providers.)

1. **Use the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) “*Arboviral Encephalitis/Meningitis Case Report Form*” to obtain the initial clinical and exposure information.**
 - a. Fax a copy of the form for **suspected** WNV cases to DOH Communicable Disease Epidemiology (206) 361-2930.
 - b. Call an epidemiologist (206) 361-2914 **before** submitting samples to PHL for testing to discuss the case and receive approval for testing.

2. **Screen suspected cases of WNV infection for testing at the DOH Public Health Laboratories (PHL) based on clinical presentation.** Suspected cases with the following are appropriate for testing at PHL:

- **Any** adult and pediatric patient hospitalized with a presumptive diagnosis of **viral encephalitis** (defined as fever, headache, and/or altered mental status which can range from confusion to coma)
- Any adult or pediatric patient admitted with presumed **Guillan-Barré syndrome or acute flaccid paralysis** (asymmetric paralysis) with or without fever.
- Any **hospitalized patient ≥ 17 years old with aseptic meningitis** (defined as fever, headache, stiff neck and CSF pleocytosis)
- Suspected WNV infections related to transfusion, transplant, breastfeeding, perinatal transmission, laboratory or occupational exposure, or other unusual circumstances of transmission.

Laboratory sample submission to PHL: Each specimen should be labeled with the patient’s name, date of birth, county of residence, medical record number, specimen type, and date of collection. Send a minimum of 1 cc. of serum and/or 1 cc. of CSF on a cold pack with a lab submission form to:

Washington State Department of Health Public Health Laboratories,
Attn: Virology
1610 NE 150th St., Shoreline, WA 98155

3. **If a patient does not meet one of the criteria above, laboratory testing should be done at a commercial laboratory.** (see attached sheet for clinical labs)
4. **If you receive a report of a WNV infection from a commercial laboratory:**
 - a. Fill out (DOH) “*Arboviral Encephalitis/Meningitis Case Report Form*”.
 - If the patient meets clinical criteria above, request additional serologic testing at PHL.
 - If the patient does not meet criteria, there is no need for additional testing.
 - b. Fax case report form and lab reports on all suspected or laboratory-confirmed cases to Communicable Disease Epidemiology (206) 361-2930.
 - c. For information call: (206) 361-2914 or (877) 539-4344.